

Receipt of an initial Office Action on the merits is awaited.

**PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT**

Prior to examination on the merits, please amend the above-identified application as follows:

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please cancel claim 4 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Please amend claim 1 by replacing the indicated claim with the following clean version. (See Attachment A for the marked up version of the amended claim.)

1. (Amended) A catalyst composition comprising:

a perovskite composite oxide of the type expressed by a rational formula  $ABO_3$ ;

the rational formula  $ABO_3$  is expressed by a formula  $A'_{1-x}A''_xB'_{1-y}B''_yO_3$  [, and] ;

the  $A'$  is La or Ce or both of them, the  $A''$  is at least one element selected from the group consisting of La, Ca, Sm, Ce, Sr, Ba and Pr, the  $B'$  is at least one element selected from the group consisting of Co, Fe, Mn and Gd, and the  $B''$  is at least one element of noble metals; and

the  $x$  is set in a range of  $0.1 < x \leq 0.5$ , and the  $y$  is set in a range of  $0.05 < y \leq 1$ .